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# What People Talk About

## The CIA Not So Unbridled

To the Editor—A recent Sunday editorial entitled "Cloak-and-Dagger Stuff" discusses the problems of conducting secret operations in a democracy. The materials for the editorial are drawn from the book, "The Invisible Government," by Wise and Ross.

The major thesis of this book is that the Central Intelligence Agency is a free-wheeling operation subject to grossly inadequate control by either the President or the Congress.

In your own editorial you state "without qualification, 'Subject to no control or accounting by Congress, it (the Central Intelligence Agency) has been able to topple foreign governments. . .'" This is simply not true.

There are four subcommittees of regular standing committees of Congress that exercise regular and continuing control of CIA funds and activities. These are not, as the book claims, "shadowy" subcommittees "controlled by the most conservative members of Congress." They are composed of some of the most senior and respected men of Congress. Sen. Saltonstall is one of them.

The Congress can never be accused of reticence in carrying out its constitutional function of legislative oversight over the activities of the executive branch. Yet it has voted down several resolutions offered by individual members to set up a special CIA watchdog committee. The only reasonable conclusion that can be drawn is that as a whole Congress believes that present arrangements provide an adequate mechanism for control.

In the Globe's editorial you ask "why are its (CIA's) subversions of foreign governments usually in the form of a palace coup, or of the installation of an unpopular government." The answer is again that it isn't so.

The authors of the book convey this impression from the few examples they have selected to prove their contentions. These examples are told in a racy style to imply to the reader that the authors were right by the side of the President or the chief CIA agent when the fateful operation took place. Clearly they weren't and their sources are often gossip, hearsay, and self-serving statements after the fact.

There can be no disagreement that the reconciliation of secret operations with a democratic government operating in an open society is a very difficult problem. But this book appears more interested in peephole revelations than in contributing constructively to public understanding.

May I say that I served in OSS with resistance groups in occupied Europe during World War II and participated in the work of two presidential committees concerned with defense policies and the operations of the National Security Council.

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